3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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is finished; then the host will offer a greeting, but no further conversation takes place until all the milking is over. Even his wife will not talk to a man milking. And women themselves do not milk as a rule. I was once called to see an old woman who had been terribly mauled by an enraged cow, which she had attempted to milk during her husband's illness. What enraged the cow I do not know, but the Konde believe that it was the sex of the milker, though men also are sometimes injured by enraged animals, usually a cow suckling her first calf.

Milk that is not drunk fresh is put into large pots, and the milk of five to ten days added day by day. It is covered over very carefully, and eaten, when thick, along with potatoes, bananas, or other food. The whey, which is poured off when the pot is full, is also drunk for its cathartic properties. The pots, of which a family with a large herd may have up to ten, are thoroughly cleansed after use with boiling water, and then laid on the fire for perfect disinfection. Sometimes the milk is further hardened by being allowed to drip from a closely woven basket for several days, when it becomes hard and slightly tough, with a flavour like that of milk cheese.

I have more than once proved the sustaining qualities and pleasant taste of thick milk prepared in the Konde fashion. On one occasion I was separated from my carriers, and, about two in the afternoon, having tramped since six in the morning, I stumbled into a village, and dropped exhausted under a great spreading tree. The chief, observing my exhausted condi-

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content with maize roasted on a piece of tin, or a few potatoes roasted in the fire. I have known them, too, going perforce for a long time and quite uncomplainingly, without salt, or any kind of relish for their food. For all these drawbacks are fully compensated for when the white man kills game; then they gorge; then the astonishing capacity of the native to take in food is seen at its best, or worst. A friend of mine once, far up in the mountains, killed an eland, and, leaving his men to deal with the carcase, went to his camp. His men kindled a fire at the ndkill, a sat down to feast; when they returned to camp in the early hours of the morning, one man was missing, and his dead body was found where he fell, killed by his own immense greed, aided by a heavy rain which set in during the night.

But while feeding arrangements "on safari" are primitive in the extreme, the ordinary household arrangements are by no means so. The housewife operates with a great variety of pots, baskets, calabashes, and some women are celebrated cooks. A possibly mythical story of olden times tells how two chiefs went to war for the possession of a great woman, who was the wife of one of them, and was widely distinguished for wisdom and sagacity, and for her unusual culinary skill. She was secured by the attacking chief, and lived with him quite happily as his chief wife; an unusual honour, for it is a rule that captured wives never attain to that distinction.

The Konde, like most Bantu peoples, are noisy

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A few Christian families are beginning to [777] 264

eat *en famille*, but the practice is not looked upon with favour. The open air meal in good weather of course gives way to the meal in the house when it rains.

The far-stretching banana groves in which the villages are hidden indicate one of the favourite foods of the people. There are many kinds of banana, from the tiny "Lady's Fingers" to the great plantains, half an arm long; and they are eaten in almost as many ways. Some are eaten direct from hand to mouth, peeled and corded, for even the small cords which adhere to the fruit after the skin is removed, are meticulously attended to; other kinds are cut up and cooked; some are ground into flour, of which porridge is made, or it is added to the flesh pot to give flavour to the soup. 262 252

Maize is cooked in many ways: whole, mashed, or ground; boiled or roasted; mixed with other foods, or alone. The porridge made from maize flour is a greyish sticky-looking mess, wholly repulsive to a white man, and is often eaten without relish of any kind. Cassava, with the poison washed out by three days' soaking in running water, then dried and ground into flour; beans, with the skins removed by parboiling, and pressed between finger and thumb; peas cooked without preparation; potatoes, often eaten with milk; these are main food-stuffs, but very many small herbs are used, especially for seasoning, and some very pleasant dishes are often served up to feed sick and well alike.

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251 Fish provide many a dainty dish. The bulk of the
262 fish caught is half roasted over a slow fire for preservation; and in that condition it will keep for many weeks. A great dainty is the *unsusu* fish, which is roasted and ground to flour, and hung up in grass bags in the roof, to be used as required.

262 But the Konde is happiest of all when he has flesh
252 to eat; perhaps because it is a rather uncommon event. His cattle are not primarily for killing; primarily they are wealth stored up and increasing year by year. But he kills when there is a birth or a marriage or a death; for all these are occasions when one must not think of expense; and a number of Christians now hold birthday feasts for their children in addition to the occasions I have named. Generally the meat is preferred "high"; and it is then cooked with banana flour, salt, animal fat, pepper, the latter an Arab introduction. A kind of pie is sometimes made, by cutting the meat into slices, and putting it in layers in a pot, the layers being separated by *mbwiga* leaves, a plant which has a curry-like flavour; and the bottom of the pot is covered with maize to prevent the pie being burned.

251 The Nyakyusa practise a method of preserving flesh which I have not heard of as in use elsewhere, though it may really be quite common. Besides the universal method of roasting the freshly killed meat over a slow fire, there is the running water method. The fresh meat is placed in a sandy patch of running water, and left for about three months; but it may be visited

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daily for supplies, provided it is again quickly covered up with both sand and flowing water. All this must be done at night lest the hiding-place be revealed to others, and the flesh stolen. 251

Bread is made of twice-ground maize with salt added. It is kneaded into loaves of about three inches thick, and placed in layers, interleaved with banana leaf, in a pot with maize in the bottom. This bread is often taken on a journey, and will keep for five or six days. Eggs are "scrambled," with milk and salt, in a broken pot, but this is a European introduction. No young girl will eat hard-boiled eggs; they produce a snake in the abdomen, which, of course, in turn produces barrenness. 252 ● [177] [842]

Very unpleasant to our minds are some of the delicious foods the Konde rejoice in: flying ants eaten alive as they are picked up where they fall from their brief honeymoon in the air; crawling white ants, a horrible mass of moving life; the Kungu fly, found on Lake Nyasa, whence it comes ashore in dense clouds, settles on bush and tree, and is shaken off into small baskets, to be taken home and baked into cakes while it is still fresh. In Bundali it is said that some still eat lion's flesh, and once upon a time the crocodile was eaten at Karonga. Sorcerers are accused of devouring human flesh. A new grave is sprinkled with a powerful medicine which makes the corpse come up without disturbing the soil, and the ghoulish feast is enjoyed without leaving a trace of the deed behind. 262 [754 366]

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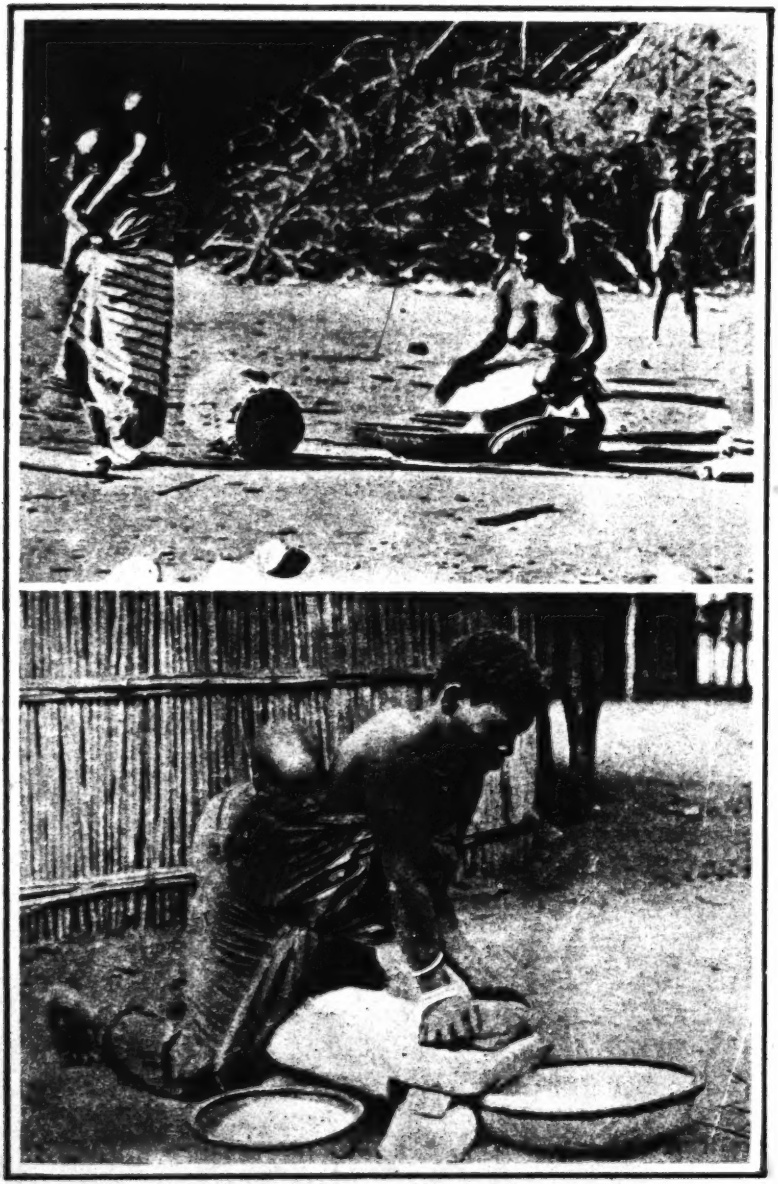

SIFTING.

A turning motion of the basket brings the chaff and dust to the top, and a skilful throw casts it out, leaving the flour, which is now ready for cooking.

GRINDING.

As evening approaches, the rasping sound of stone on stone with the grist between, may be heard all over the village, as the housewives begin to prepare the evening meal. The flour falls into the basket in front, and more grain is taken from the one at the side.

[facing p. 128]

245 Bananas and plantains are grown all over the district except in the highlands to the north and west. Numerous local varieties abound, with a red plantain and the *Sukari* variety of [262 banana as recent introductions, and are used 273] exclusively for food, no beer being made. They [251] are mostly dried and pounded with pestle and mortar to be used as flour, although they are also eaten whole after roasting.

244 Sweet potatoes are extensively grown. They are planted on contoured ridges from 3-4 feet high. Planting distances vary from 6 inches to 1 foot in either direction. They are planted in March to May and north of Tukuyu take eight months to mature, but south of that place four ● [252] months is sufficient. Sweet potatoes are eaten boiled or roasted.

243 Finger millet is used more for beer-making than for food. It is always sown broadcast in [262 November to January and harvested in March 273] to May. The land is first hand-hoed and all grass put into heaps and burnt when dry. In the highlands to the west the trees are lopped and branches piled in heaps to be burnt. Contoured ridges are put in at intervals depending on the slope of the land. The harvesting is carried out just before the grain is ripe by cutting off the heads and stacking in the field while ripening proceeds. The heads are then collected into large baskets and steeped in water for a day, after which they are taken out and rubbed with the hands to separate the [251] grain from the chaff. The millet is then dried and stored in earthenware pots or mud-covered baskets until required. It is reported that it can be stored for five or six years by this method, but I have not verified this personally.

244 Beans are nearly always interplanted with 252 maize or sown in banana plantations and the 262 local seed is of mixed varieties. They are eaten boiled as a relish with other food such as maize. The leaves are also eaten dried or fresh.

245 Groundnuts are grown in the medium and 251 lower altitudes. Planted in November to February and harvested in April to July, they are dried in the shell and eaten raw.

243 Rice is grown on the lake shore and also in the neighbouring foothills. It is sown broadcast in November to February and harvested in May to August. Yields are not high in the foothills, being about 6-7 bags of paddy to the acre. Many local varieties are grown, such [252 as Musafiri, Mwangulu, and Marula. The hill 438] rice is eaten boiled, but most is sold hand-hulled in the markets for purely local consumption.

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but I was astonished that this trap was erected relatively near to my tent on the border of the village of Katumba.

6. *Fishing.* Fishing is a much more common practice with the Nyakyusa than hunting. The old-established custom of poisoning fish in their smaller rivers is still widely used. The poison is derived from the *unkeredu* shrup. Its branches and leaves are broken off, reduced to small pieces between stones and then packed in a covering of grass to resemble a long cigar about 1 meter in length and 25 cm in width. The bundles prepared in such a manner are fixed between two rowes of stones placed across the river for this purpose. The poison gradually diffuses into the water, which takes on a green colour. The fish are soon affected by the poison and rise to the surface with gaping mouths. They are then easily caught with a scoop made from bamboo. The open end of a piece of bamboo is split into several sections and the splinters are bent apart and tied together with raffia to form a sort of funnel[1]. The fish are strung through their gills on small pliable sticks and roasted at home over a fire. All people are allowed to join in this fishing which to them is always a festive occasion in the cooler season.

Fishing in broader and deeper rivers, such as the lower Kiwira, is done by means of large fish-traps. They are made and repaired by men on the banks of the river. The traps are attached to poles rammed into the bed and almost invariably boats trying to reach the Lake Nyassa get struck on submerged poles. These large fish-traps strung across the river form quite an impressive sight. Looking up-stream, they look like the bows of little ships standing in a row.

7. *Preparing food.* With the Nyakusa the preparation of food is so exclusively the task of the women, that R. Thurnwald ist quite correct when says (Black and White in East Africa, London 1935, p. 157): "Menfolk starve if there are no women to prepare their meals". There is thus a very strong division of labour between the sexes, also noticable in the carrying of loads. For a young man to carry the load of an old woman or his sweetheart, whom perchance he might meet on the road, would be a grave violation of a rigid custom.

As the preparation of the food is the women's duty, also the grinding *(ukutika)* of the corn in a mortar *(ikituli)* with a pestle *(ikitiro)* which is the exclusive task of the female sex. The wife is always the first to rise in the morning to prepare breakfast. Usually, however, this is not

[1] NB. They are of the same kind as those of the Hottentots along the Great Fish River in South West Africa.

very substantial, the main meal being taken in the evening shortly before sunset.

8. Manufacture. The pot for cooking *(indeku)* is placed on three stones which form the hearth *(ikipembero,* hearth stones). The flat bowl made of clay used for the needs of the kitchen is called *ulwangabia* and a pig pot used for storing water *ingumbe*. The pots of clay are manufactured by Kissi women because in their land on the north-eastern shores of Lake Nyassa the best clay is found. In the eastern part of the Nyakyusa country adjacent to Kissi land the women visit the pottery markets of the Kissi, but to the remoter villages, e. g. around the Rungwe volcano the pottery is brought by Kissi men. In this case, owing to the great distance from the Kissi-Land the men carry the loads of eight to ten pots on their head between split poles of bamboo. The Kissi pots I saw in the Rungwe Station were ornamented in a rough way with red ochre and seemed only slightly baked. The hearth stones, however, are made by the Nyakyusa women themselves as I was able to observe near Rutenganio, where widows manufactured them for sale.

In many villages of the Nyakyusa I could watch basket-making. This I saw being done by men. In the chief's hut in Katumba I had the opportunity to admire a great number of very big baskets *(ifituba)* for storing grain, smeared with cow dung on the outside. The attractive closely wickered baskets, which are filled with *malesi* (millet) and then placed in water for a night in the process of beer-brewing were originally made by the Buanyi, but nowadays also the Nyakyusa are said to be skilled enough to weave them. I had no opportunity to observe it, but could acquire an excellent specimen of that wicker-work.

9. The Meal. At the beginning of each meal the hands are washed, including those of children. The men take their meal separately from the women. The wives only eat when their husbands have been satisfied. Boys under ten years eat with their mothers, but as soon as they begin to live in age-set villages, they eat together with their friends of their own age-set, as described in detail by Mr. G. Wilson in his "Introduction of Nyakyusa Society" (Bantu Studies X, p. 271). The head of the family likes to eat together with his friends.

Meat is eaten very seldom, but on special occasions such as marriages, death lamentations, christenings of Christianized natives, enormous quantities are devoured. *Inyama* (Swahili: *nyama)* is the Nyakyusa word for all sorts of meat, *ingombe* for that of cattle and *ingambaku* for that of oxen. Near Utengule I saw black pigs *(inguruwe,* pig)

grubbing for food outside the stable. Old people also eat the meat of apes *(salila,* ape) and of jakal *(ingebe).* The Nyakyusa men are generally very fond of eating fowl, indeed: *"Wakugana inyama sya inguku",* they are fond of the flesh of fowl.

Bones are usually given to the children for gnawing. Eight to ten boys may be seen sitting in a circle and alternately gnaw on the same bone, often drinking a little milk *(ulukama)* the while.

During a boating on Lake Nyasa I saw the well-known columnar clouds formed by the so-called Kungu-flies in the distance above the surface of the water. These flies are also eaten by the peoples on the shore of the Lake. When these insects come shore-wards they are caught, roasted at home and then eaten. But I was told that sometimes they are also caught and eaten out on the Lake, being squeezed into lumps between the hands.

The Nyakyusa eat with the right hand, but when the meal consists of such food as boiled maize and beans *(ingate)* they also use spoons *(uluiko)* made of folded strips of banana leaves. Nowadays, however, tin spoons and tin plates have come into wide use. The ancient eating-mats *(akatefu,* diminutive of *urutefu)* are also being more and more displaced.

When the meal is over, the vessels and plates are cleaned with the fingers, bent inward, and then licked off. The mouth is rinsed out with water.

10. Diet. The vegetable diet is roughly the following. The light meal in the morning consists mostly of boiled maize-cobs *(ingate),* sweet potatoes *(imbatata),* bananas *(ilitoki,* pl. *amatoki),* roasted bananas; or, *amawifu,* sweet bananas. The main meal in the evening, shortly before sunset, usually consists of flour porridge *(ikiyindi),* beans *(indima),* both often boiled together with maize, peas *(efinyaga)* very often in the form of porridge, maize-corns *(ikirombe)* and groundnuts *(isyabala,* pl. *amasyabala).* These groundnuts are dried in the sun on mats. Bananas, if dried in the same manner, are usually halved lengthwise and spread out sometimes on banana leaves. I have seen this done in the village of Katunba. Granary stores are very often, e. g. near Utengule (on the border of Nyakyusa and Safwa culture), erected on platforms supported by poles. The container is a big quadrangular basket, roughly three by three meters in length and 1 m in height. The roof has the shape of a large Chinese hat and can be taken off from the lower part of the granary.